



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



MAY IS MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

Gov. Dennis Daugaard says May is National Military Appreciation Month, a time for all to honor, remember, recognize and appreciate those who have served in the past and those now serving, as well as their families.

"My recent visits with South Dakota troops in Kuwait and Afghanistan have given me a renewed appreciation for their service to our state and our country," Gov. Daugaard said. "Our soldiers serve proudly when called to duty – both overseas and at home. They are well-trained and determined, and they do a remarkable job, I couldn't be more proud of them."

National Military Appreciation Month includes: Loyalty Day (5/1), Victory in Europe Day (5/8), Military Spouse Appreciation Day (5/11), Armed Forces Day (5/19), and Memorial Day (5/30).

Each of those days provides an opportunity to learn more about military members and the families who have given of themselves to support and defend the principles we hold dear.

"Let's dedicate this month to honor all of our military men and women and their families and educate the youth of our nation on the historical impact the US military has had for our country," said Adjutant General Timothy Reisch, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of the Military. "This nation's veterans and their families have contributed so much to earn and pre-

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200TH ON U.S. SOIL

Members of the SDNG's 200th Engineer Company were welcomed home yesterday when they arrived in Fort Dix, NJ, after their year-long deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Welcoming them home was Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG; State Command Sergeant Major Larry Zimmerman; 143rd Engineer Battalion Commander Lt. Colonel Pat Pardy; and State Command Chief Warrant Officer Five Darla Crown.

The 200th, of Pierre, Chamberlain and Mobridge, deployed with approximately 184 members in May 2011. As a multi-role bridging unit, the 200th had a mission to maintain, repair and replace existing military bridges throughout Afghanistan.

Members of the 200th will spend about a week at Fort Dix completing de-mobilization requirements before returning to South Dakota.

Plans are underway for a "Welcome Home" ceremony, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 12, in Pierre.



WELCOME HOME



THANK YOU

OPEN HOUSE FOR WOMEN VETERANS

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System will host open houses recognizing women veterans in seven communities during May.

The events are open to all women who served in the military and are intended to share information about VA eligibility and health care, as well as an opportunity to meet other women veterans.



The open houses are scheduled from 3:00-6:00 pm and will be held at the following locations:

May 10 - Sisseton Community Library (305 E. Maple)

May 14 - Sioux City Wilbur Aalfs Library (529 Pierce Street)

May 15 - Watertown Regional Library (160 6th Street)

May 16 - Yankton Community Library (515 Walnut Street)

May 22 - Spirit Lake Public Library (702 16th Street)

May 23 - Sioux Falls Caille Branch Library (4100 Carnegie Circle on W. 49th Street)

Questions should be directed to Charlotte McGrath, Women Veterans Program Manager (1-800-316-8387—Ext. 7747) or email her at charlotte.mcgrath@va.gov.

STATE VETERANS HOME VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR SERVICE

It's been said that each of us, no matter what our age or background or walk of life, has something to contribute to the life of this nation. Volunteers are the life blood of every organization and entity. They contribute time and energy year after year.

The value of volunteerism was reiterated over and over again this weekend at the Michael J Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home (MJFSVH) annual volunteer appreciation banquet held on the campus of the MJFSVH. This annual event affords staff the opportunity to thank the volunteers for their dedication, commitment and continued support of the veterans and their families.

"Our Volunteers are extremely valuable, deserving considerable praise and public recognition," said Larry Wilcox, Superintendent for the MJFSVH. "We sometimes refer to them as our 'ANGELS'! Wilcox noted that they have recorded over 7,200 volunteer hours on campus by their partners. This number does not reflect volunteer hours for events held off campus.

"It's no secret that this dedicated group of volunteers is an important cornerstone of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home," said Steve Harding, Deputy Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "They not only gave time and manpower, but they shared their unique talents."



FROM KUWAIT TO AFGHANISTAN, GOVERNOR VISITS OUR TROOPS

In mid-April, Gov. Dugaard participated in a U.S. Department of Defense trip to Kuwait and Afghanistan to visit South Dakota National Guard soldiers and airmen. South Dakota currently has about 450 National Guard troops in the Middle East, and he had the opportunity to see nearly 100 of them.

He spent his first day and night in Kuwait where he met a few South Dakota National Guard soldiers. The next day they traveled to Camp Buehring, where he met two groups of South Dakota National Guard soldiers on the flight line. Dugaard noted that troop morale was very good. He took this opportunity to tell them how proud he was of them and how grateful we are for their service to our country.

The next day they traveled to Afghanistan, landing in Kabul and meeting with military leaders for an overview. They then traveled by helicopter to Bagram, where emergency medical facilities treat wounded warriors.

During the next two days, they traveled to several forward-operating bases. Upon their departure from Afghanistan, the Governor flew to Landstuhl, Germany, where the most severely injured troops are sent.

"We all owe a great debt to the military men and women who wear our nation's uniforms, said Gov. Dugaard". Over the centuries, their service has earned and protected the freedoms we enjoy. That freedom has enabled the wonderful lives we lead. "



VA OPEN HOUSE AND BENEFITS FAIR

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System will be hosting a Veterans Open House and Benefits Fair on Tuesday, May 8, from 4:30 pm - 7:00 pm at the Sioux Falls VA (2501 W. 22nd Street).

Veterans are encouraged to bring their DD214 and their 2011 income tax Form 1040 with them to assist in applying for benefits.

This open house will provide veterans with an opportunity to learn more about VA eligibility, benefits, health care and other services.

For more information, please contact Shirley Redmond, Public Affairs Officer, Sioux Falls VA Health Care System, at (605-333-6889) or (1-800-316-8387—Ext. 6889).



Upcoming Events

May 8—SDDVA Spring Mini Conference—Rapid City—1981 E. Centre Street—10:00 am
May 9—SDDVA Spring Mini Conference—Pierre—520 S. Pierre Street—10:00 am
May 10—SDDVA Spring Mini Conference—Brookings—520 Main Avenue—10:00 am
May 11-13—DAV 73rd Annual Department of SD Convention—Brookings
May 11—Veterans Town Hall Meeting—Brookings
May 12—60th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Display—Brookings
May 16—Vietnam Veterans of America State Convention—Pierre
May 19—Armed Forces Day
May 28—Memorial Day
Jun. 7-10—VFW State Convention—Brookings
Jun. 9—Marine Corps League Department of SD Convention—Pierre
June 9-23 Golden Coyote Annual Training Exercise
Jun. 10-12—Dare to Dream Conference—Spearfish Holiday Inn
Jun. 14—Flag Day
Jun. 14-17—American Legion State Convention—Watertown
July 21-22—Sioux Falls Air Show
Aug. 27-29—VSO Annual Benefits School—Pierre

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us
Web site: <http://mva.sd.gov>

